Werelings: Small Shapeshifters, 5e race

Race

Werelings

(Version 2: more detail, sensible balance, less clutter)

Due to arcane experimentation, wild magic, or perhaps polymorphed romance, some of the small races have a spellcaster's familiar as an ancestor. When this heritage runs true, it grant the ability to change shape into that of a small animal.

Werelings are quite rare, and when seen changing form are too often assumed to be afflicted with lycanthropy. For this reason werelings usually keep their form changing abilities secret. Many werelings live as ordinary members of their apparent humanoid race. Others live apart in isolated settlements where they can change form freely without arousing fear or suspicion. Still other werelings live feral and wild among the animals, seldom leaving their animal form.

Note: Points on the left are roughly based on JamesMusicus's guide: http://zappyman2.wix.com/musicushomebrew#!homebrew-races/c8co

Comments and Feedback are desired. **too strong? Too complicated? Too weird?**

Wereling Traits

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 2. If your animal form does not fly, your choice of your Wisdom, Intelligence, or Charisma score increases by 1.

Age. Werelings mature at the same rate as their humanoid ancestry. The form changing magic however is not kind to their body, and they seldom live much beyond 100 years, a much briefer span than full halflings and gnomes enjoy.

Alignment. Werelings may be of any alignment, and often are aligned differently than their surrounding community. There is a strain of natural wildness in them that pulls them away from lawful alignments.

Size. Your size is small. When in humanoid form your weight and height are appropriate for the race you appear to be.

Ordinary Appearance. Choose halfling, gnome, goblin, or kobold for your humanoid ancestry. When in humanoid form, you appear to be an ordinary member of that race— even to identifying magic. However you gain no racial abilities or bonuses from that race.

Werelings usually have some slight resemblance to their animal form. A raven wereling might have a prominent nose and glossy black hair, while a toad wereling might have a wide mouth and flat feet.

Rarely a wereling in humanoid form will have a stronger resemblance to their familiar ancestor, and have difficulty passing as an ordinary humanoid.

Animal Form. A wereling has two physical forms. A wereling changes to his animal form according to a druid's Wild Shape feature with the following differences:

- A wereling only has one animal form.
- A wereling can remain in animal form for as long as it wishes.
- A wereling can change form three times before taking a long or short rest. Changing from humanoid to animal and changing from animal to humanoid both count as a use of this feature. At level 5 the limit increases to 5 times per rest. At level 10, you can change forms an unlimited number of times.
- A wereling in animal form uses the hit points and hit dice determined by your humanoid form. When killed or rendered unconscious your form does not change.
- A wereling's form changing uses are counted separately from a druid's uses of Wild Shape.

Telepathic Bond. Due to their ancestry, werelings have a certain affinity for spellcasters. They have a slight, instinctive fascination with such people. Should a wereling form a relationship with a full caster who does not have a familiar, the wereling may form a telepathic bond with the spellcaster. The bond allows two benefits:

While within 100 feet of each other the wereling and spellcaster may choose to communicate telepathically, verbally or with emotions or images.

When beyond 100 feet, but still in the same plane, each knows the general direction to the other.

This bond is broken if the spellcaster obtains a familiar. Either the wereling or the spellcaster may end the bond, but there wereling may not form another telepathic bond for a week.

Languages. In humanoid form, you can speak, read, and write Common, and the racial language of your humanoid ancestry. You can also speak the animal language granted by your familiar ancestor.

In animal form, you can read all languages you know, but only speak the animal languages granted by your familiar ancestor, (unless your familiar ancestor was a raven). The animals with which you communicate are limited by their intelligence.

Familiar Ancestor

A wereling's familiar ancestor grants it certain unusual abilities while in humanoid form. Choose one familiar ancestor. This choice cannot be changed.

Rules for Flying Animal Forms

Even in animal form, flight is extremely difficult and takes years of practice to equal the natural skill of birds and bats.

- At Level 1 a wereling can only fly 15 ft before it must land or at least briefly touch down, or else it tires and spirals safely to the ground. If you haves movement remaining a wereling can continue to fly after landing on something.
- At level 4 this limit is extended to 25 ft.
- At level 8 this limit extends to 50 ft.
- Finally at level 12 the wereling masters flight and can fly as well as the base animal.

Bat

Bat-blooded werelings often have large ears and long, delicate fingers.

Ability Score Decrease. Your Constitution score decreases by 1.

Echolocation. You have blindsight within 30 feet, as long as you are not deafened.

Animal Language. You have the ability through sound and gesture to communicate with Bats.

Cat (Tibbits)

Cat-blooded werelings often have an insufferably smug attitude, thin moustache, and faint stripes in their hair.

Ability Score Increase. Your Charisma score increases by 1.

Catfall. You can fall 30 feet without taking damage, and have advantage on rolls to land on your feet. Falling damage is calculated after the first 30 feet, so a fall of 40ft would cause 1d6 bludgeoning.

Animal Language. You have the ability through sound and gesture to communicate with Felines.

Crab

Crab-blooded werelings are often squat and wide, with receding foreheads, and large hands.

Natural Armor. You have a naturally tough skin. When unarmored, your AC is equal to 13 + your dexterity modifier.

Animal Language. You have the ability through sound and gesture to communicate with Crustaceans (Crabs, Lobsters, and Shrimp).

Hawk

Hawk-blooded werelings often have a piercing gaze, an aquiline nose, and gleaming hair.

Ability Score Increase. Your Charisma score increases by 1.

Ability Score Decrease. Your Constitution score decreases by 1.

Keen Sight. You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight, in bright daylight.

Animal Language. You have the ability through sound and gesture to communicate with Raptors (Hawks and Eagles).

Lizard

Lizard-blooded werelings are often long and lean, with little hair and bulging eyes.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 1.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Animal Language. You have the ability through sound and gesture to communicate with Lizards.

Poisonous Snake

Snake-blooded werelings often have an unblinking gaze, tend towards baldness, and have unusually pointed canines.

Ability Score Increase. Your Wisdom score increases by 1.

Snake Bite. You have a non-proficient bite attack which deals 1 point poison damage. As an action you may poison a weapon for 1d4 poison, which last for 1 minute.

Animal Language. You have the ability through sound and gesture to communicate with Snakes.

Owl

Owl-blooded werelings often have wide, flat faces, large eyes, and a small nose and mouth.

Ability Score Increase. Your Wisdom score increases by 1.

Ability Score Decrease. Your Constitution score decreases by 1.

Lesser Darkvision. You have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 30 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Animal Language. You have the ability through sound and gesture to communicate with Owls.

Rat

A rat-blooded wereling often has a pointed face, large, widely spaced eyes and a whisker-like moustache.

Ability Score Increase. Your Intelligence score increases by 1.

Keen Nose. Due to your keen sense of smell, you gain advantage on Investigation or Perception checks to find something within 20 ft that has a distinct smell (such as living beings, chemicals or food).

Animal Language. You have the ability through sound and gesture to communicate with Rodents.

Raven

A raven-blooded wereling often have a prominent nose, dark eyes and very glossy black hair.

Ability Score Increase. Your Intelligence score increases by 1.

Ability Score Decrease. Your Constitution score decreases by 1.

Chatterbox. While in raven form you may speak any language you know.

Animal Language. You have the ability through sound and gesture to communicate with Corvids (Ravens, Crows, Magpies, and Jays).

Spider

Spider-blooded werelings often have unusually long limbs and fingers and small, fat bodies.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 1.

Uncanny Climbing. You may use Dexterity instead of Strength for Climbing and Jumping rolls. While climbing you move at full speed.

Animal Language. You have the ability through sound and gesture to communicate with Spiders and Scorpions.

Toad

Toad-blooded werelings often are squat, with a wide mouth, protuberant eyes, and large flat feet.

Ability Score Increase. Your Constitution score increases by 1.

Almost Amphibious. A toad wereling can absorb some oxygen through his skin. This allows the wereling to hold his breath three times as long. If a toad wereling runs out of breath underwater water it merely falls unconscious-- he does not drown.

Animal Language. You have the ability through sound and gesture to communicate with Frogs and Toads.

Weasel

Weasel-blooded werelings often have pointed faces, short limbs, and long, lean bodies.

Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 1.

Heedless Rush. As a bonus action, move up to your speed towards a hostile creature you can see. Before the end of your next turn, your next attack is at disadvantage.

Animal Language. You have the ability through sound and gesture to communicate with Mustelids (Weasels, Ferrets, Minks, and Wolverines).